

NAVY DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
DIVISION OF NAVAL HISTORY (OP 09B9)
SHIPS' HISTORIES SECTION

HISTORY OF USS RELIEF (AH-1)

The story begins with the RELIEF in the Boston Harbor.

Prior to February 1943, the ship had served the fleet as its number one hospital ship. When the war broke out she was in Argentia, Newfoundland. Before being sent to Boston, she had lain in Casco Bay, Maine, almost forgotten, it seemed. She acted as station hospital ship in Casco Bay for nine months prior to the time she came to Boston. The crew members swore she could never be moved out of the bay, because she was aground on a mound of coffee grounds. Just prior to the time she received orders for Boston, the Admiral present in Casco Bay moved his flag aboard her while his own ship went into dock for repairs. The flag remained aboard for a few days only. In approximately the time it would take for Washington to get word of the flag's shift to the hospital ship, a reply came, directing the flag to get off at once, and directing the RELIEF to proceed to Boston to make ready for war.

The crew took this in stride. They decided that Washington had lost track of the ship for the past nine months, and when the flag reported aboard, Washington was suddenly reminded that the Navy had a hospital ship in the States, and immediately dispatched her to the fighting fronts. The crew said the ship would be in Casco Bay still, if the flag hadn't given away her location.

Between the days of 8 February and 23 February 1943, USS RELIEF was docked in the Navy Yard at Boston, Massachusetts.

Technically, no one knew why she had been ordered to Boston. Actually, everyone aboard realized that she had been sent to Boston to prepare for actual participation in the war.

She entered the Navy Yard painted drab grey, her peacetime color. When she left, she was painted white. A broad green stripe was painted around her hull, and Red Crosses on her sides, superstructure decks and stack. The crew said she was getting "torpedo-proof" paint.

February 23rd RELIEF sailed out of Boston Harbor, bound for the Panama Canal.

From 3 March 1945 the RELIEF was at Balboa, Panama Canal Zone. Some of the men felt salty enough, in Panama, to buy their first souvenirs. But those have been lost, for the most part, or thrown away, because the souvenirs they got later have a different value -- a grimmer, but a better one.

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When the ship sailed from Panama she was under orders to proceed deep into the South Pacific. She was bound for Noumea, New Caledonia. This was the first South Pacific port the RELIEF saw. Her duty there was to service the fleet. When she arrived, the battle for the Solomons was raging, and transports brought the wounded and injured out of the battle zones to where she lay in the rear area. Dissatisfied with being so far removed from the scene of action, the crew grew restless very soon. They felt, and rightly so, that they were not in a position to do their greatest service. The opportunity would come later. Meanwhile, she lay in Noumea among tenders and repair ships. She was, in effect, a repair ship herself, repairing broken men as the tenders repaired broken machinery.

In Noumea, the medical staff encountered malaria and dengue fever for the first time. Some of the ship's crew were stricken with the fevers.

In the first mail, word was received that the ship had been reported lost at sea. The life jacket that had been used in the man overboard drill at sea between Balboa and Noumea had drifted ashore, and was picked up by Coast Guard authorities. The name of the ship was stenciled on the life jacket. The story grew from there, until it reached the newspapers at home. Printed, it read that RELIEF had gone down at sea, and all the evidence remaining was one life jacket stenciled with the name of the ship.

From 29 April to 6 July, the ship was at Espiritu Santo, in the New Hebrides group. Espiritu Santo is about 420 miles north of New Caledonia. The Japanese had been stopped. The war was moving back again, for them, forward for the allies. RELIEF moved forward with it. The battle for Guadalcanal had been won, and Noumea had become a rear area base. Espiritu Santo had become the forward base. The ship moved after the fleet, to the new base of repair and supply. Here, RELIEF received her baptism of fire. Here she was subjected to the first air raids of her career. They were token raids, meant only to be the nuisance they were. "Washing Machine Charley" flew his lone plane over a few nights a week, and dropped an ineffectual string of bombs about the harbor. He hit nothing, but cost the men on the ships hours of sleep.

RELIEF did the same job in Espiritu Santo as she did in Noumea. She serviced the fleet. Boredom set in full time then. The crew began to think that they were doomed to spend the whole war far behind the lines, sprinkling powder on athlete's foot.

One morning the ship received word that one of our cruisers was standing into harbor with a load of burn cases. A gun turret had had a flash back, and burned the men manning the guns. Flame leaped up through the turret openings and into the inner construction of the ship. Immediate preparations were made to give emergency treatment to the injured ones. All were healed. None had scar, excepting one man, who sustained a scar on the extreme end of his heel. Later the ship would take on men burned by flash burns, bomb burst, and mortar fire. The treatment these men in Espiritu Santo received formed the basis for the treatment men would receive later as they were carried from the beaches at Kwajalein, Saipan, Peliliu, Okinawa.

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Now the ship had spent seven months in the area. By this time the routine of caring for the men of the fleet was well established. The crew felt that they had learned much from handling boats in the middle of the night, from sailing the distances they had already covered, and from drilling themselves in the daily living of this new life. But they ached from the boredom of it. They longed to take an active part in the fight.

From 7 July to 3 August, RELIEF was at Hanannah Harbor, Efate, in the New Hebrides group. She had been called to Efate to perform repair services to the men in the battle ship fleet. At the time, the concentration of battleships that would soon after strike at Munda area lay in the harbor. The ship stayed in Havannah Harbor just long enough to prepare the men of the battleships for the strike. They needed their teeth repaired, their appendix removed, their tonsils out, their colds cured.

Then the ship moved to Fila, Efate, a few miles away. Here she embarked a load of patients who were ready to be evacuated from the area. The evacuation was part of clearing out the rear bases and preparing them to receive casualties from the battles that were to be fought soon.

August 5th and 6th, the ship was again at Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides. She had cleaned out the hospitals in the Efate area and was routed to Espiritu Santo to "top off" with a load of patients. The patients she received there were also men ready for evacuation. They were to be taken to Auckland, New Zealand, where a large Naval medical force was established. Auckland provided the perfect rear base for medical treatment. The RELIEF carried on that trip mostly cases of war neuroses, combat fatigue. Auckland was civilized and out of the Tropics.

August 26th to October 3rd 1943, RELIEF lay again in Noumea Harbor, New Caledonia. During that time the routine services of the fleet were again resumed. From the 6th to the 25th of October she was at Havannah Harbor. Entering port, the ship was lost at sea for 24 hours. The current had set her more than was thought, and when time came for land to be sighted, nothing was visible excepting the flat horizon. Radio communications came to the rescue, however, and after one night of searching around in the ocean, playing "island, island, who's got the island", land was sighted directly ahead.

Again at Efate, the fleet was serviced. Again the drudgery of commonplace treatment of little ills set in. If the perspective had only been clearer, none of the crew would have minded. But the apparent fact was that the ship had been in the Pacific almost a year, and had never seen action. Only a few realized that the drudgery was a part of the preparation for the plentiful action that would follow.

October 25th to October 26th, RELIEF spent at Fila, Efate, and, mixture as before, took on board a load of patients to be evacuated to the rear areas of Auckland. October 26th to October 28th, the ship was again at Espiritu Santo. She filled up with a load of patients and started again for Auckland. In spite of gripes about being "out of things", no one minded going to Auckland.

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In November, the ship was ready for her first experience with actual warfare. She sailed for Funafuti, Ellice Islands, to wait for the Tarawa invasion. Funafuti was the first coral atoll the ship had been in. Later it would seem to the men that they had never seen anything else but coral atolls.

The ship arrived at Funafuti in a heavy sea, her entire stay there is memorable for the roughness of the water in the atoll lagoon. It was chronically rough. The mission there was to service the fleet, but with the additional incentive of waiting for the Tarawa invasion to begin. Finally, on the 27th of the month, word came that the invasion of Tarawa was on, and the ship sailed.

Seeing Tarawa after seeing Funafuti was like seeing an advertisement labeled "before and after". When the palm trees had risen into sight over the horizon at Funafuti, they showed as a fringe, like moss growing on the sea. When Tarawa came in sight, there was nothing but stumps.

It was the ship's first look at the utter destruction left in the wake of Naval bombardment. It was as if an immense knife had been swept across the tops of the island, and had trimmed all the foliage in one blow. Nothing but grotesque ruins remained. There was no sign of life, no sound, no movement on the beach. Not even the palms waved, for there were no waving parts to the palms, only the rigid, jutting stumps.

RELIEF anchored in the lagoon and went to work. The beach was a shamble. Stinking, torn, putrid, every inch of it, from the dangling remains of Japanese barbed wire defenses along the beaches, to the exploded pillboxes and gun emplacements along the air strip. Decay could be smelled all the way out into the lagoon. On the beach, seabees worked feverishly, day and night, to clean out the rottenness.

When RELIEF arrived, the island was sick, and without facilities as yet to determine the cause of the trouble. RELIEF's medical staff went ashore and brought back the sick men, and specimens from the island. The laboratory tested the specimens, diagnosed them as bacillary dysentery.

The island looked and smelled as though an insane giant had run amuck, and had dug it up with his heels, torn into it with a spike. The coral surface of the island looked as if it had boiled over. Flies picked up the disease and spread it over the area. The medical staff of RELIEF fought back at the disease before it had a chance to become a disaster. The men from the beach came out to the RELIEF for liberty. They were grateful for any chance to spend a few hours away from the stench and filth of the rotten beaches.

In Tarawa, RELIEF experienced her first severe air raid attacks. Almost nightly planes came over the lagoon. The seabees crouched in their lagoons and behind their guns, and cursed each hit on the ground they had repaired. The men of the RELIEF sat on their ship and wished they had something to fight back with.

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When orders were received to move to Kwajalein, RELIEF organized herself to receive patients direct from the landing beaches. She had the satisfaction of knowing she was the first hospital ship allowed to steam within yards of the fighting beaches and receive casualties direct from the fighting.

She steamed into the lagoon, and lay to near the transports. After loading all of the casualties from the transports, she proceeded to the beaches across the lagoon, and lay within a few yards of where the fight was in progress. She proceeded with caution across the lagoon, for it was not known for sure whether the Japanese had mined the lagoon itself.

Once in position, the casualties began to pour aboard. The men could see the troops go by them in small landing boats, LCVPs and LCMs, and hit the beach. Most went on; some were hit. Those, they saw carried again to the boats and out to RELIEF, which they had passed on the way in. Boats lined up by the gangway, sometimes twenty at a time, waiting to get the wounded men aboard.

That day, the blood banks paid dividends. In the opinion of one of the surgeons aboard, the two most important factors in saving lives that day were, first, the fact that the ship lay within a few minutes of the beach, and second, the administration of blood plasma.

All of the operating rooms and all of the dressing rooms were in use. In the main operating room, as many as five operations were in progress at one time. During the course of the afternoon, the eye surgeon performed an operation in the master at arms shack, when he saw that the patient was too sick to wait to be carried to one of the regular operating rooms.

Late in the afternoon, a landing barge pulled alongside. One of the seamen at the gangway shouted "For God's sake, those are Japanese in that boat!"

Here was the RELIEF's first look at the enemy. Lying in the bottoms of the landing boats, torn, bleeding, miserable, they looked pitiable. Some were able to walk up the gangway; most had to be carried. The Japanese received the same treatment as the men of our own forces.

February 12th to February 14th, the ship was in Pearl Harbor. The islands looked like the paradise they were advertised to be, after Kwajalein. At Honolulu docks, the ship unloaded the patients.

The Americans were unloaded first. When all but a few of the Marines had left the ship, the Japanese wounded were carried up to the quarter deck. As the Japanese lay in stretchers on the quarter deck, the last few Marines came up from their wards and crossed the deck. For the first time during the journey, the Marines were face to face with their wounded enemy. The Marines looked at the Japanese; the Japanese looked at the Marines. These were the men who had shot each other four days ago. The officer of the deck watched them. After a moment an American Marine leaned down to where one of the Japanese lay, and gave him a cigarette.

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Departing on 21 February, RELIEF carried a load of medical supplies to Roi Island. The supplies were to be used in the hospitals being established on the island. Roi Island had been hit as hard as Kwajalein or Tarawa. The block house the Japanese had used for a power plant was being converted to a hospital. After nine days; the ship sailed for Majuro, the most beautiful atoll in the world.

Majuro had been occupied quietly, with little opposition. There was no destruction of the natural magnificence of the tropical island. The water is as blue as the sky, and as transparent as crystal. The bottom of the lagoon is a mass of fairy story coral formations. Tropical fish swarm off shore, and glow in the light of the sun as if they had been painted by a clown. The islands are overgrown with the moist green of the tropics. The coral sand is padded with a carpet of fallen vegetation.

The largest fleet concentration the world had ever seen lay at anchor in Majuro. The size of it, the number of ships, was staggering. RELIEF had never provided medical care for so many ships and so many men, nor is it probable that she will ever again.

After three months in that tropical paradise, the ship sailed for Kwajalein. At Kwajalein from 5 to 15 June, her main job was to unload the patients remaining on board and sail for Eniwetok, where she was to wait for the Saipan strike.

To prepare for Saipan, RELIEF loaded to capacity with medical stores. At the same time she continued the routine treatment of the patients in the fleet. The air strikes over Truk had started, and one night, at midnight, the skipper was awakened by the signalman. An urgent message had come in, directing the skipper to report to the Port Director. The attack on Saipan was about to commence. Before dawn, the ship sailed, making all possible speed.

Arriving at Saipan on 24 June, the crew knew approximately what to expect. Saipan is an island, not an atoll. It looked massive against the skyline. The immense bulk of the island appeared out of the mist, and solidified as the ship approached. The smoke of the Naval bombardment and the artillery fire ashore appeared. Dive bombers wheeled and whined over the island, driving relentlessly at the Japanese dug in there.

The Japanese had held the island for more than twenty years; the charts of the anchorage were scarce. The ship dropped her anchor just off the beach at Charan-Kanoa.

Boats loaded with casualties began to swarm out to the ship. The wounded men were carried out in landing craft of every description. The boats made an endless chain from the beaches to the ship's sides. She loaded steadily all day long. Just after dark, Japanese planes came over. A smoke screen was laid in the harbor, but did the RELIEF little good. The smoke parted by a freak in the wind's direction, and passed on each side of the ship's bow, leaving her gleaming white and apparently alone in the harbor. Japanese planes flew directly over the ship, but dropped nothing but flares. The all clear sounded, and the Captain called for standard speed and started out of the harbor. The ship headed for Kwajalein to unload the patients.

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The ship stayed in Kwajalein only long enough to unload the Saipan casualties before steaming out again on her errand of mercy. After stopping at Eniwetok during the first two days of July, she headed toward Saipan. This mission was organized along the same lines as on the first trip. The island was not yet secured, the battle still in progress. Most of the mountain was in the hands of the Marines. RELIEF took on board 276 wounded Japanese, in addition to the load of American Casualties.

July 20th and 21st, the RELIEF was unloading patients at Kwajalein. Again the RELIEF refueled, took on new supplies and stores, and the next day sailed for Saipan again. By the time she arrived, the island of Saipan had been secured. But the fight was still on for Tinian. Casualties came from the beaches of Tinian slower than they had from Saipan. The Japanese were tiring; they knew the fight for the islands was hopeless. Foul weather delayed the loading for the first few days. Meantime, the RELIEF resumed the regular services to the ships around her, much as she had done in the early days at Espiritu Santo and Efate. It was the old routine of waiting, the fillings and the refractions, on the doorstep of a terrible battle. Then the weather subsided, and the ship filled to capacity with American wounded sailed for Eniwetok.

The ship stayed only a few hours at Eniwetok. During that time, she took on some few supplies, topped off with fuel and sailed for Pearl Harbor, with the Tinian casualties still aboard.

When the ship stood into Pearl Harbor on 16 August it was the first time in two years the ship had had a chance for Navy Yard repairs. It was also the first time the ship had been able to transfer some of the men who had been with the ship since long before she had left the States.

Then the ship was needed in the forward area again. She loaded down with medical supplies. Once again the ship dropped anchor into the coral bottom of the lagoon at Eniwetok. An epidemic of bacillary dysentery was raging in the atoll. Within a week and a half, the spread of the disease was checked.

Orders were received to sail to Palau. The Peleliu-Angaur attack had begun. All the old familiar routines were rechecked and rehearsed. The Palau group is evil looking. It is dark and dank, full of shadowy grottos and grotesque rock formations. The sea washes into it and is caught in a wild perplexity of tangled crevices and caves, which swirls angrily about in an attempt to escape. The whole aspect of the place is forbidding, sharp, jagged. An air of sheer evil seems to hang over it.

The men could make out the battle as the ship approached, raging in the thousand caves that punctured the surface of the volcanic rock. The American troops were forcing the enemy back, deeper and deeper into the creviced sides of the rocky island, digging them out with fire and with shell. Even the weather was foul. The sea around the beaches was frothed and swollen, as if the ocean itself had been hurt by the constant beating of the guns.

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It was too deep to anchor, so the ship lay to, waiting for the weather to subside enough for the casualties to be sent out in boats. The ship had to be maneuvered constantly, away from the underwater reefs. RELIEF lay off the beaches in daylight hours, and at night steamed out to sea fully illuminated.

The ship loaded patients for a week. During that time, Tokyo Rose announced that Peleliu was a disaster for the Americans. She said that American hospital ships were streaking to the scene of the catastrophe. Someone evidently was watching the RELIEF steam in to the beaches each morning, and thought that she was a different ship each time.

One of the chief complicating factors in the treatment of the wounded at Peleliu was gas gangrene. The medical department attributed the prevalence of gas gangrene to the fact that the island had been an agricultural settlement prior to the invasion, and the Japanese fertilized their soil with human excretia. The Americans were wounded, and fell into that soil, and the infection spread.

After a week, orders were received to sail with the load of wounded men. A week later she reached Noumea, New Caledonia. Here the news came to sail for home. The ship needed repairs badly. The men aboard her needed a look at their homes. They spoke of the States as "the old country" or "the mother land" now. She had discharged the patients from Palau. Now she loaded up again.

On 4 November 1944, the RELIEF entered the Golden Gate at San Francisco, California. Home!

Upon completion of the availability period, on 13 February 1945, the RELIEF headed out to sea again, bound for Ulithi, West Caroline Islands. From the 5th of March to the 26th of March, the ship lay in Ulithi. The air attacks on Tokyo were in full swing. On the 6th of March, RELIEF received on board the crew of a crashed B-29. On 11 March Air Flash Red was received in the harbor. Two Japanese suicide planes came into the area. One crashed into the after flight deck of the USS RANDOLPH, an aircraft carrier lying off the RELIEF's starboard quarter. The other Japanese plane mistook Sorlen Island for another aircraft carrier, and made its suicide dive into the coral island just forward of the RELIEF. At four o'clock in the morning, RELIEF received casualties from USS RANDOLPH. Most were suffering from severe burns of the body.

Alerts were sounded on several of the successive days, but nothing materialized. On the 24th and 25th, the RELIEF received casualties from ships returning from the task force operations against the Japanese homeland. The USS BOUNTIFUL was in the harbor at the time, and RELIEF transferred many of her cases to the BOUNTIFUL. Among the casualties received were patients from the huge first line aircraft carrier, USS FRANKLIN. The big ship stood into the harbor on the 24th, and lay off the stern of RELIEF. She was an awesome sight. Twisted, torn, her entire structure distorted by the intensity of the explosions she lay listing hard to one side. The casualties came aboard horribly burned. They had brought the ship back from off Tokyo, in spite of the severest damage any ship ever suffered, and still survived.

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On the 27th of March the ship unloaded the patients at Guam, Marianas Island. She now prepared for the most rigorous duty of her Pacific career -- Okinawa. According to plan, on 30 March, a rendezvous was made with another hospital ship, the USS COMFORT, and the two ships proceeded toward Okinawa Gunto.

The two ships arrived at Okinawa on 2 April, the day after the battle commenced. At approximately 0610 a single engined aircraft was sighted crossing the bow of the RELIEF at a distance of about five miles. The aircraft was identified as a Japanese fighter. The hospital ship's lights were still burning at full brilliance. The morning was clear and dark. The Red Crosses and green band of the ship were clearly visible. Without warning, the enemy plane made a ninety degree turn and approached the RELIEF and the COMFORT from bow on. The plane made a straight run on the RELIEF and from a short distance ahead, released a bomb. Lookouts claim to have seen gun flashes coming from under the plane's wings, and splashed in the water along the sides of the ship, indicating that the plane was strafing at the same time.

Meanwhile, from over the horizon, on the port beam of the hospital ship, a destroyer on patrol off the island had picked up the Japanese plane on its radar screen. The destroyer witnessed the attack on the hospital ships, and opened fire on the Japanese plane. Just as the plane released its bomb, a close burst from the destroyer's anti-aircraft guns rocked its wings, throwing the bomb a few yards wide of the target. The bomb landed 25 to 50 yards off the port side of the RELIEF, and the ship passed over it before it exploded. The explosion of the bomb shook the RELIEF violently, but the only casualty was loss of suction in a lubricating oil pump, which was placed back in operation immediately.

The enemy plane turned for another run, but the destroyer, later identified USS WICKES, engaged the plane again, and drove it away before the approach was completed. RELIEF manned her security stations and kept her hospital illumination on, maintaining her course and speed. USS WICKES became the favorite destroyeer of RELIEF's crew. She was not proceeding in company with the RELIEF, and her appearance was a fortuitous accident.

A few hours later, another Japanese fighter was sighted. This one flew directly over the ship and stunted above her for several minutes, but no attack was made. The hospital ships proceeded to the transport areas and anchored off the beaches where the landings were made. Casualties began to come out from the beaches immediately.

Just prior to sunset, the hospital ships retired from the landing beach areas, and proceeded to sea. The idea behind the maneuver was to afford the hospital ships the protection of their illuminated markings. Enemy planes were over the anchorage area many times each night. It was believed that the hospital ships would be afforded greater protection from attack if they proceeded to sea fully illuminated than if they remained in the harbor. Accordingly, the two ships sailed forth, lit up like Christmas trees, shielded from air attack by nothing more than a document. Once at sea, a sitting duck, the crew remembered that the Japanese had never signed the Geneva Convention!

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The ships steamed out to sea until midnight, and then reversed course, and steamed back toward the landing beach area. In the morning, they entered the anchorage and commenced loading patients once again. This plan was continued during the nine day stay at Okinawa, and though almost daily alerts were received, no direct attack was made on RELIEF. However, COMFORT was not so lucky. One night as the ships were retiring as usual, RELIEF intercepted a message from COMFORT stating that she was under aerial attack. She was a short distance off RELIEF's bow at the time, and though no damage was sustained by either ship, the attack delayed COMFORT in port when she returned to Guam to unload.

On 10 April, RELIEF had a full load of casualties from the beaches, and got underway for Guam, but was diverted to Saipan. She moored to the dock at Saipan on 15 April, unloaded casualties, and the next day got underway for Ulithi.

At Ulithi she took on stores and fuel, and then proceeded again to Okinawa. On 22 April RELIEF stood into Okinawa. The retirement plan was abandoned, and the ship stayed at anchor during the dark hours, taking advantage of the cover of smoke. On the 22nd, there were two air raids in the anchorage area. Each night and each day the raids continued. The casualties were loaded during the alerts, and between times.

By the 26th of April, the ship got underway, with orders to proceed to Guam. USS COMFORT had stood into the Okinawa anchorage in the meantime. She was on the run that RELIEF had originally been scheduled for, and the RELIEF was leaving ahead of her because the COMFORT had been detained at Guam. In the tragic light of what befell COMFORT later, this is most important.

The following day, RELIEF was diverted to Tinian. As she stood into Tinian on 30 April, the shocking news of the Kamikaze attack on the COMFORT was intercepted on the radio. After discharging her casualties onto the beaches, RELIEF executed a quick turn around and sailed for Saipan. On 2 May she got underway for Okinawa via Guam. By the 10th she was again loaded to the hilt with casualties and sailed for Guam.

Never time for rest, she stood into Guam on 14 May, unloaded her casualties, did a quick turn around, and raced back to Okinawa. During the period ending 30 August USS RELIEF made three more of these marathon trips from Guam to Okinawa.

On 9 July, RELIEF got underway from Guam and proceeded toward Leyte, arriving there on the 13th. Here she was assigned the duties of Station Hospital Ship. An epidemic of bacillary dysentery was raging in the harbor. She served as the center of research on the epidemic as well as receiving the majority of the cases for treatment. It was during her duty at Leyte that word was received of the Japanese surrender.

From the end of the war until her return home on 14 November, USS RELIEF was engaged in evacuating Allied prisoners from the Japanese prison camp at Mukden, Manchuria, and Magic Carpet Duty.

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By Directive of August 1946 she was disposed of by the War Shipping Administration.

It was a long story, looking back over it. She started grey, in Boston. She lay in the sub tropics for months, sweating out boredom. She moved forward with the amphibious assault of the warfare. She grew in strength and courage as her men grew. She had her baptism of fire; saw her sister ships violated by treachery, narrowly escaped herself. At the height of her healing powers, the war suddenly ended. She had proven herself to her men in every possible way. It was a satisfying thing to contemplate.

And there it is -- the story.

USS RELIEF earned five Battle Stars on the Asiatic-Pacific Area Service Medal for participating in the following operations:

- 1 Star/Gilbert Islands Operation -- 25 November - 8 December 1943
- 1 Star/Marshall Islands Operations:
Occupation of Kwajalein and Majuro Atolls -- 3 - 4 February 1944
- 1 Star/Marianas Operation
Capture and occupation of Saipan -- 24 June - 4 August 1944
- 1 Star/Western Caroline Islands Operation
Capture and occupation of southern Palau Islands -- 6 September - 14 October 1944
- 1 Star/Okinawa Gunto Operation
Assault and occupation of Okinawa Gunto -- 25 - 29 June 1945

STATISTICS

OVERALL LENGTH	484 feet
BEAM	61 feet
SPEED	18 knots
DISPLACEMENT	7237 tons

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